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(54) PRODUCTION OF L-
EPHEDRINE
INTERMEDIATE

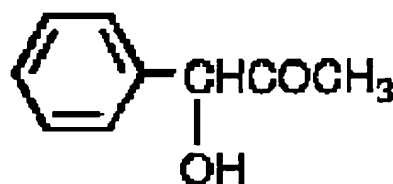
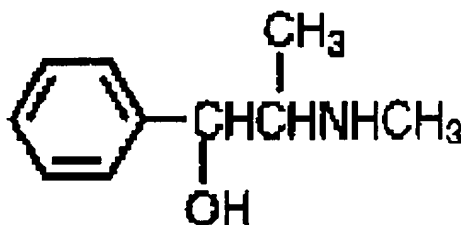
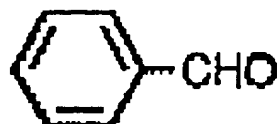
(57) Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To efficiently obtain L-phenylacetylcarbinol useful as an intermediate for producing L-ephedrine as physiologically active substance of Ephedra sinica, etc., by culturing a yeast belonging to the genus Saccharomyces in a culture medium containing pyruvic acid and benzaldehyde.

SOLUTION: This method for producing the intermediate of L-ephedrine comprises adding pyruvic acid of formula I and benzaldehyde of formula II to a culture medium containing a carbon source, inoculating a yeast (e.g. Saccharomyces cerevisiae) belonging to the genus Saccharomyces into the culture medium, and subsequently fermenting the yeast at 30°C for five

hours under stirring, thus, the objective L-phenylacetylcarbinol of formula IV useful as an intermediate for producing L-ephedrine of formula III which is a physiologically active substance of Ephedra sinica is obtained.

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